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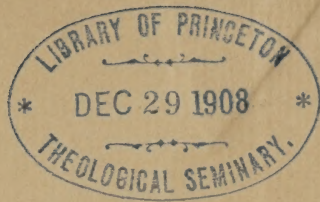
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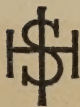


# THE MINISTRY OF THE ETERNAL LIFE

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE NATIONAL  
BAPTIST SOCIETIES AT THEIR ANNIVERSARIES  
AT DAYTON, OHIO, MAY 20, 1906

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## THE LIFE

- John 1 : 4. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
- 4 : 14. The water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.
- 5 : 26. For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself.
- 5 : 39, 40. Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life ; and these are they which bear witness of me ; and ye will not come to me that ye may have life.
- 6 : 33. For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world.
- 6 : 35, 48. I am the bread of life.
- 6 : 51. I am the living bread which came down out of heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.
- 6 : 54. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life.
- 6 : 57. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father ; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me.
- 10 : 10. I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.
- 10 : 27, 28. They follow me : and I give unto them eternal life.



John 17 : 3. And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.

THE LIFE EXPERIENCED AND PROPAGATED

John 20 : 31. These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye may have life in his name.

1 John 1 : 1-3. That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

5 : 11, 12. God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.



## SYNOPSIS

### THE MINISTRY OF THE ETERNAL LIFE

#### Introduction :

Missionary motives underlie the basal facts of religion.

Motives classified according to these facts.

The ministry of the eternal life includes all classes of motives.

The eternal life in the fourth Gospel ; and,

The ministry of it the purpose of Christian life.

#### 1. The characteristics of the eternal life:

- (1) It is spiritual;
- (2) It is ethical;
- (3) It is free;
- (4) It is indestructible.

#### 2. The agencies of its ministration:

- (1) Their variety.
- (2) Their unity.
- (3) Their witness to the present activity of Jesus.

#### 3. The call for its ministry :

- (1) By the needs of men for the eternal life.
- (2) By the native capacity of the human heart for the eternal life.
- (3) By Christian valuation of the eternal life.

#### Conclusion:

The personal experience of the eternal life issues in the effort to mediate it to others.



# THE MINISTRY OF THE ETERNAL LIFE

THE three foundation facts in religion are: God is, I am, and there are others than myself in the world. Therefore, religion is theological, personal, and social. The interesting truth for us now is that, no matter from which of these viewpoints we study religion, we find a missionary motive. God unveils himself to bring men into fellowship with himself, *i. e.*, revelation has a redemptive purpose. The Revealer is also the Saviour. The Incarnation means that God claims every man for himself, and through the tangency of the flesh seeks to win us to spiritual oneness with himself. Every consciousness of personal relation to God has in it the element of service, because its essence is love; and the element of stewardship, because the life it enjoys is the gift of God; and the element of obedience, since the surrender of the will to him is the core of the regenerated life. Likewise, the way of our entrance into the world by birth, and our necessary ties to other persons force upon us the truth that religion is concerned with social duties. We know it is



true that we do not love an unseen God unless we love the visible brother. When this sense of solidarity bursts the bounds of home or neighborhood, and becomes racial, our consciousness of duty to mankind becomes universal.

Motives for missionary effort, therefore, are varied, and may be classified according to these basal facts of religion. They are theological, as when the "lost" condition of men, whatever content we put into the adjective, moves us to seek their restoration to a normal relation to God. Man's need of a Saviour has ever been a powerful incentive to missionary and evangelistic effort. The Great Commission also states a combined theological and personal motive. The lordship of Christ, accepted and felt, imposes the task of missions upon obedience. Among social motives we may mention the philanthropic. He who really loves his neighbor as himself will seek to share with him all blessings that are enjoyed. The second commandment states the philanthropic principle. The Golden Rule compels missionary effort. Among personal motives we may indicate the sense of stewardship. "As a gift you received; as a gift impart" is true of every endowment we have. Not for privilege alone were we favored with any gift, but for administration also. Let us devote our time to the study of a motive that is theological, personal, and social.

The mission of Jesus is variously stated. The apostle who seems to have interpreted our Lord most deeply lays stress on the thought of life. Jesus brought to the world a gift. It was life of a special quality. He possessed it in himself. It was nothing else than the life of God in its species. "As the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself." This peculiar life Jesus imparted to others. "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me shall live because of me." That is, the life of Jesus mediates to every one who believes in him the same life that he received of the Father. Throughout the fourth Gospel this is the emphasis. Only three times is the idea of a kingdom hinted at: Once in the talk with Nicodemus, to whom Jesus says that only through a new life can one enter God's kingdom, for which the teacher in Israel was looking according to the current notions; again, when the popular clamor to make Jesus a king after the feeding of the five thousand was instantly suppressed and met by a sermon whose text was "Life"; once more, when he confessed himself a king in the realm of spiritual truth to the Pilate who answered with a sneer. Everywhere else Jesus gave life. The Gospel throbs with vitality.<sup>1</sup> It opens with that great

<sup>1</sup> I have elsewhere developed this thought at greater length. See "Addresses on the Gospel of St. John," published by the St. John Conference Committee. Providence, R. I., 1905, pp. 463-467.

word in a prologue that reads as if it were written after the rest of the book, and in order to state its contents. In chapter one the first five disciples are gathered. Faintly, obscurely, the beginnings of the new life are felt, clouded by errors as to its author and his mission, yet it shows itself by the effort to bring another : reproduction is its first act—the theological, personal, and social aspects at once appear. In the third chapter the new birth is insisted upon. The learned theologian is puzzled by Jesus' effort to transfer his thought from the mechanics of legalism into the region of vitalities. In the fourth chapter a woman feels the first impulses of the eternal life, and forgets her business to become a missionary to the men of her city. In the fifth and seventh chapters the healing of the man with the long-standing infirmity gives occasion to the declaration that in himself alone is life, not in the Scriptures that were to his antagonists a quarry of legal stones to fence in the Sabbath and other institutions. He becomes his own apologist for making "an entire man whole," ministering life to all parts of his being. In the sixth chapter it is of life that he talks most simply and profoundly. In the seventh chapter he declares that drinking from him shall cause rivers to flow from us. In the ninth chapter a man born blind becomes his defender, and seeks to persuade others. The care for this new propagandist leads to the



discourse in the tenth chapter in which he states his mission as that to bestow abundant life. And so on through the whole Gospel. The cycle is invariable. Life is stirred by testimony, testimony leads to investigation, investigation leads to experience, and experience leads to testimony, and so the process goes on in this circle. The hearer finally becomes a preacher. The disciple develops into an apostle. The author of the Gospel writes his autobiography at the opening of his first Letter. He says in plain terms that he heard, then he saw, and handled, and experienced the life, and is as a result declaring it to others that they might have fellowship with him. He uses literature for the same purpose. The introduction to his Letter, and the end of his Gospel tell the same story. "These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."

What could be more modern? What could more accord with our present-day ideas of things? What is this but the old story, as old as the first germ or cell of life, and as up-to-date as this morning's birth—the truth that guarantees our food and ourselves, the law of reproduction; the fact that life produces life; the charter of creation, "be fruitful and multiply," translated into the region of the spiritual? It is the great meaning of the incarnation, "the mastery of the inner life of other

men by his truth and ideals through whom these should be propagated. It meant an unbroken succession of such men through time. This and nothing less would permanently introduce him to the race of men in an effective, saving way.”<sup>1</sup> The august fact of the incarnation would have missed its supreme function had it failed to perpetuate itself in the lives of men continuously. Here is the real apostolic succession, not the mechanical formality of ceremony whether of induction into a continuous hierarchy, or into an unbroken chain of baptismal administrators, but that of the very ideals and spirit of Jesus absorbed by us from him who lived “because of the Father.”

And what are the characteristics of the eternal life that Jesus gives? It is spiritual. It is to know God. That is Jesus’ definition of it. It is fellowship with God. It is communion with a person, and not acceptance of a creed, nor allegiance to an organization, nor the practice of an ethical system, nor a dreamy abstraction. The living God and the living man are in fellowship. The soul inhabits God, and God dwells in the soul. The heart of man rejoices in all intercourse with God. Nature as unfolded by science, history as the story of providence, man the image of God reflecting him, the Bible as the literature of the unique revelation of the one God, Jesus

<sup>1</sup> “Why Is Christianity True?” E. Y. Mullins, D. D., p. 138.

the Exegete of the Father, are all unveilings of God, and opportunities for this spiritual intercourse with him.

Theology needs every source of knowledge. The very nature of this life as spiritual fellowship with God forbids us to refuse any glimpse of him and compels us to accept every truth of Scripture, science, sociology, and history as his truth. He unifies all truths. Nothing is secular to one who has eternal life. All things are spiritual. Every study helps us to know him. This life is thus educational in its effects. It makes us seek after God everywhere. It proclaims that only the spiritual interpretation of the universe is adequate, and that God is the secret of all things. As true worship was delocalized by Jesus and made a matter of spirit and reality, so all acts and characteristics of the eternal life are exalted to the same dignity. No rite or form, no organization is of the essence of eternal life. These are indeed all vain unless they genuinely express or minister to the life that is spiritual. They are to life what sound is to breath. They are as words to thought, affairs of conveyance and convenience. The real life is spiritual, a correspondence with God our environment, in whom we live and move and have our being. God is spirit. Man too, is spirit. Spirituality is devotion to the things that belong to both spirits. Our earthly lives should be careers of



fellowship with God as he is seen in every realm of knowledge and experience.

It is ethical. A life given by a holy God can be only holy. The eternal life is the righteous life. Since it is received through Jesus and is like his, it shares in his ethical qualities. He prays that we may be one with the Father even as he is one with him. This oneness for us can be only ethical, not metaphysical. The moral qualities of our Lord's life are to be reproduced in ours. He is the grain of wheat that falls into the ground and multiplies itself. The Christ dying and living again yields the harvest of Christlike lives. He is known in the world to-day only as he is revealed in the lives of his followers. We know no Christ after the flesh. His Spirit breathing through his disciples, active in his followers, is the only revelation the modern world has of him in terms of personality. In the region of personal character, and in that of social relations the ethical qualities of his life appear only as mediated by those who love him. In this way individual life is to become the expression of his life.

All human institutions also are to be leavened by his Spirit. The State, the home, the industrial and commercial realms, the forms in which society expresses itself are all to be moralized. As the wind and the insect carry the pollen from plant to plant, so the spirit of his followers is to

make ethical the relations of men political, commercial, and universal. Eternal life has for its ultimate sweep the moralizing of all human life, personal and social, whether domestic, racial, international, or universal. Less than this is inconceivable in the thought of Jesus. Because God is holy, we must be holy. To eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood, in his own strong words, is to have eternal life. What else can these words mean than that the life resulting from the assimilation of such food must itself be like his own. Our present-day domestic religion needs the emphasis of this quality. There is too much dreamy ecstasy, too much high dogma coupled with ethical obliqueness among us. Righteousness needs to be thundered into the ears of saints whose piety is only creedal or emotional. Jesus provides for dogma by education, and for emotion by temperament and experience, but insists upon the ethical element of righteousness as the initial essential of the eternal life.

It is free. This life is so intimately related to its Giver that it is unmediated by human institutions. So close is the soul to the God who makes it the recipient of this life that to thrust anything between them, whether priesthood, ordinance, church, or Bible is well-nigh the greatest impertinence that could be committed. The one Mediator of this life says (Matt. 23 : 8-10) : "Call no man your father on the earth ; for one is your

Father, even he who is in heaven." We have a spiritual Progenitor through whom, in the second birth, we come into possession of this life. "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren." Intellectually we are free. Authoritative creeds and mental mentors and regulators of others' religious opinions are an unutterable offense to this eternal life. Each soul has its birthright liberty to sit at the feet of Christ the Teacher of all. "Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, even the Christ." Hierarchies and rectors are outside the genius of this life. He who presumes to control the free life of a soul in its relation to God usurps the place of Christ. This is the antichrist of present practice, and is to be opposed no less in bodies like our own than in highly developed centralized ecclesiasticism. If we claim this freedom for ourselves, let us grant it to others, no matter to what race they may belong. Life it is that is put into each soul, into each race, into each age, into each environment, and the expression of that life is to be left to work itself out. The task of evangelism or missions is not to engraft an individual experience on another person's life nor an exported ecclesiasticism on a heathen stock, but to bear life to another. Every man grows his own type of life. Every nation will have its own expression of the eternal life in terms of its peculiar history, temperament, civilization.



Let us insist upon this freedom of life. It is God's endowment of his own gift. Let us welcome and wonder at the manifold grace that confines itself to no type, at the infinite love that uses the satisfactions of all varieties of human need to interpret its opulence. The oratorio of redemption will be no monotone whether personal, national, or denominational. Each age shall have its own strain, each race its own phrase, each variety of religious experience its own chord, and each heart its own note. These will make the melody of the song of praise to the Lamb. But only because there is freedom of the eternal life will there be the august majesty of the everlasting harmony.

It is indestructible. Precisely because this eternal life is spiritual and ethical and free can it never be destroyed. It is in essence the same as the life of God. Since Jesus from whom we receive this life was the resurrection and the life, he who receives it from Jesus can never die. Resurrection, he declares, is not the reanimation of corpses, but the indestructible life itself. The Lazarus whom he called back was not the decaying dust, but the personality whose spiritual, ethical, and free communion with Jesus was unbroken by the experience of death. "Eat me," he says. "Whoso liveth on me shall never die" (John 11 : 26), he declares. Here is the one argument of the Scrip-

tures for a blessed immortality. It is the quality of the life that God bestows.

O my soul, thou hast said unto Jehovah,  
Thou art my Lord,  
I have no good beyond thee !  
I have set Jehovah always before me :  
Because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved.  
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth :  
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.  
For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol ;  
Neither wilt thou suffer thy beloved to see corruption.

—*Ps. 16 : 2, 8-10.*

Indissoluble companionship with Jehovah is the thought. This is the fact that gave Peter his argument for the resurrection of Jesus in his great sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2 : 22-36). God's fellowships are everlasting, is the argument of Jesus with the skeptic Sadducees as he speaks of the relation between the patriarchs and Jehovah that could not be affected by death. Indestructible friendship is what was revealed at the resurrection of Lazarus. "Who shall separate us from the love of God?" Nothing, not even death (Rom. 8 : 35-39), is the triumphant challenge of Paul. "All things are ours, even death," is his boast, because we are Christ's and Christ is God's (1 Cor. 3 : 21-23). I repeat that there is only one basis for our hope in a blessed immortality given to us in the Scriptures, and that is the inviolable

nature of the life that God gives to us, that we receive from him through the opening of our entire selfhood to his life. Eternal life is to know God, and God does not let the grave cut our acquaintance with him.

How is this eternal life bestowed? Through what agencies? Here too, the heavenly treasure is in earthen vessels that the excellency may be of God. All agencies that minister to the self-realization of men are vehicles of the eternal life. For, the eternal life is selfhood in process of realization, all parts of our being developing out of the abnormality of sin towards normality, Jesus himself being the norm. Paul sums up the matter when he declares that all the known instrumentalities of his time were to make men full-grown, even unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph. 4 : 8-16). That is the end—mature, finished, complete men, men like Christ. Every agency that contributes to such a product ministers the eternal life. If under the Spirit of God we have developed instrumentalities unknown to the apostolic age, let us include these also among the ascension gifts, and use them for the glorious end for which the primitive instruments were so grandly employed. What person is so richly endowed as the Christian? What institution has been so opulently capitalized as the Church of Christ with all her agencies?

See the variety of these vehicles of life ! We cheat ourselves out of our boundless horizon when we limit our views to a type of evangelism that has merely sought to save a soul for entrance into a *post-mortem* heaven. Our real aim is to get something into the life of men. The eternal life is the life of the Eternal One in us. It is an existence spiritual, ethical, free, and imperishable, that is to be the experience here and now of every person. What agencies promote that ! The heart to heart personal conversation, as when the Christ in quiet hours, and almost in whispers talked to the teacher in Israel, and the woman of Samaria, or the dull but receptive disciples in retirement ; the Sunday-school teacher leading the little group into methods of study, and into truths that change their young lives ; the preacher in his pulpit, slowly and patiently helping his hearers to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth ; the evangelist with his special gifts for introducing men to the Saviour ; the missionary organizations, for convenience of service limiting themselves by geographical territories into city, State, home, and foreign societies ; the philanthropies reproducing in our day the compassion of Jesus, in their ministry to sickness in hospitals, by nurses, and medical missions, in their care for the lonely, the aged, the infant, the orphan, the unfortunate of every kind in that heavenly city of homes dispersed all over the earth ;



the reforming agencies that seek to make the higher life less hard to live by taking from environment the hostile energies, and checking the free play of temptation upon the souls of men; the social movements for the better adjustment of human relations and the realization of the ideals of brotherhood; the educational institutions of all grades that seek to unveil God as he has worked and is working in the physical universe and history, and also to enlarge the capacity of the mind to appreciate God—for science, history, and psychology are witnesses of God; the printing-presses that perennially cover the earth with their innumerable millions of leaves of literature, uplifting the peoples into the regions of the noblest life, for they are following the example of John in his Gospel and Letter; the stewardship movements that emphasize the fundamental truth that life itself, and all its quantity and quality, is the gift of God; the agitations for righteousness, civic, commercial, and social, which so mightily stir our day; the quickening of conscience to detect, expose, condemn, and correct unethical actions in all realms of life—these, and all other agencies God is using before our eyes to interpret for us freshly the gift of Jesus to the world. The emancipation of the human mind from fetters of every sort, the spiritualization of our interpretation of the universe, the moralization of human relationships and the enlargement of

life in all its dimensions, are taking place through all sorts of agencies. Let no one brand any of them as secular.

It is the thought of this ministry of eternal life that alone can unify such diverse instrumentalities. Far apart they seem to be. Disjointed, unrelated, and even antagonistic they appear to a superficial observer. Yet they all head up in the thought of making the finished man, of endowing him with this life that is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. One class ministers to the body, and so perpetuates the healing ministry of Jesus. Another ministers to the intellectual nature and enriches our mental and esthetic powers, giving them the culture that enables us to know and to worship God. Another presents its tasks for our wills, crowning them with the consciousness of sovereignty in their complete achievements. Another ministers to our social relations, mellowing them with the spirit of Him who is every man's friend. Here they are all unified in the thought of the eternal life. Years ago a party explored a cavern in Virginia. A number of slopes of earth and rock in various parts of the underground marvel were scientifically studied. Curiously enough it was at last discovered that if each of these slanting planes were prolonged they would all meet above the surface and together would form a pyramid. So it is with us. We live in the dark, and each of

us thinks his own hillside the only or main slope up which men are to climb into the eternal life. But, after all, far away from us and unknown to us, are other slants up which men are toiling slowly, and when the top is reached we shall find ourselves in the light, and that all these hillsides are parts of the one mount of God.

And all these are our modern witnesses to Jesus' present activity. He is still giving life. He will never cease to give it. Luke tells us (Acts 1 : 1-2) that up to the time of his ascension Jesus made only a beginning of doing and teaching. The book of the Acts of the Apostles shows his continuing. But the history of the world exhibits him yet working. He is with us always, even unto the end. Who will deny that the progressive work of the living Christ has given us a larger conception of the eternal life than his immediate followers were able to receive? Who can halt at believing that he is now saying to us through these agencies things that no previous age was able to hear, and doing through them things that no other generation was able to receive? Who can help thinking that now and here, in the reports of our Societies, and others like them in other Christian bodies, he is doing through us the greater works that he promised to do? (John 5 : 20 ; 14 : 12.)

And has his purpose changed? Is it not now the same? Is it not the one all-embracing object

of bestowing the eternal life? Here is our privilege to see all this as the work of God, to know ourselves as factors in these agencies, as his helpers, and to co-ordinate them all by means of this conception, that he is through them, and us as related to him and them, bestowing the eternal life to the world. This is our comprehensive and inspiring vision of the days and movements in which we live.

The call for this ministry is as manifest to-day as it ever was. The same world exists, the same sin is about us, and the same Saviour is needed to give the same eternal life. The need of men for it becomes more and more apparent. Life is low, even in our most favored spots. Muck-raking is not vain because there is muck. The worship of pleasure, so characteristic of our day, stunts the sense of a higher life. The mad pursuit of money, both by men of millions, whose passion for accumulation seems unquenchable, and by men of no means, whose hunger for wealth is keen, is a noticeable feature of our modern conditions. In the best of us ambitions are confined too largely to this world. The cares and riches and pleasures of life choke the feeble longings for the eternal life. We need more than ever to preach that not even when a man has abundance does life consist in the things that one possesses. Prosperity is identified with finance, and we know too little of that ideal



that prays that one may prosper and be in health, even as his soul prospers (3 John 2). Our modern movement for evangelism in its effort to waken men to a sense of the eternal life, finds its greatest difficulties at these two points—the love of money and the love of pleasure. What note shall we sound that can arouse men to the fact there is a life that is spiritual, ethical, and free and imperishable?

And if we look at the ethnic religions, we find that underneath all the aspiration and sighing of hearts that we call heathen, there is the unsatisfied need for this eternal life. The spiritual note is absent from them. Forms, asceticisms, mechanics, there are in abundance. We need send them none of these, for they have more than enough now. But the spiritual idea? How sadly they need it! An ethical note? Who that has given any study to ethnic religions can doubt the need of this? Is uncultured heathenism to-day in advance of the cultured article whose crass immorality is so vividly described by Paul in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans? The note of freedom? In what bondages their gropings after God must be made? Inviolable caste, tyrannous custom, inflexible traditions, womankind caged by venerable usage, fear as the high product of worship, life dwarfed by suppressions innumerable, priestcraft dominant, and a hundred other prison bars tell us of the need for deliverance to the captive. Few

yet dream of emancipation with sufficient clearness to cry out for it. The imperishable life? What do they know of the power of an endless life as we feel it? Transmigrations, Nirvana, extinctions, and the like, make hazy their thought of the hereafter. The eternal life as we have conceived it is a concept unknown to the ethnic religions. And nothing else, absolutely nothing, can aid men to self-realization, the goal of their being.

The human heart was built for this life. Is there so august a sight on earth as when a child, or an adult, either in our own land, or in heathenism opens its soul to receive this gift of God? Our modern psychology tells us that the sense of God is born in every human being. Our modern educational ideal is that along with the potential personality, and the potential social sense, the inborn religious nature should be unfolded, and that practically the time of regeneration is that time when the sense of God masters, dominates, controls the personal and social powers. Let us be grateful for such a basis as the birthright of man. There is our hope. The soil is made for the seed as much as the seed for the soil. But lest any one might say that this is due to education in Christian lands, let us remember that the appeal of every missionary in foreign lands is made to-day to native human conscience, even in the evangelization of savage peoples. The truth is yet commended by mani-

festation to every man's conscience (2 Cor. 4 : 2). Orations on the external evidences for the authority of the Bible, or the superiority of the Christian religion win no converts. The stories in the fifteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel, the narrative of the Cross, the appeal of love claim the heart of man, move to shame for sin, compel repentance, and redeem. It is the same call to-day to a heathen that came to the idolater Abram, and with the same effect. No Bible, no church, no organization spoke to him, but the voice of the God of the heart was heard by the heart that God had made.

And the response of such hearts to that call is what has made our Bible, and our churches, and our organizations. Here is our hope. Let us not lose sight of it. Man as man is susceptible to the voice of God. The life is the gift of the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1 : 9). All are taught of God (John 6 : 45). Oh, that all might come to the life! Our problem is not fundamental, but is only practical. How can we so bring the message of life to men that each heart may hear it in terms of its own life? How can we so tell the good news of this gift of God that every soul may realize that it is the one thing for which it has been craving, the satisfaction of both the conscious and the undefined needs that spring from its very crea-

tion? Our methods are our puzzle. Our vehicles constitute our problem.

And let us not forget that the degree of zeal with which we spread this life will reveal our own vitality. Food sustains the individual. The species must be sustained by reproduction. How prolific are we in this life? The zest we show in the efforts to bring others to receive this life inevitably expresses our own appreciation of it. All the agencies to which we have referred are the measure of our valuation of the eternal life. Does the one who says that he does not believe in missions really possess the eternal life? Is it at all dynamic in him? Is the person who is so busy saving his own soul that he has no energy to save the soul of another at all acquainted with the sort of life that issued in the Cross, and made his own soul's salvation possible? Is the church that spends all its abundance or its pittance on itself, to hold on to its own wretched existence, composed of those who have a real knowledge of the eternal life that emptied itself, and became a servant? Does the person who belittles our educational institutions, and despises an educated ministry, and accounts the consecrated brains of scholarship as hostile to religion really know anything of the eternal life that awakes, stimulates, enlarges the noblest part of our being? Can it be true that one can claim to have a life that evermore comes



not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give itself a ransom for many, and yet ignore the needs of others, and be selfishly indulgent? Is it possible for one to know his blessed relation to God, to have a conscious fellowship with him through all the many avenues by which he makes himself known, and still see his human brother dispossessed of such privileges? Can one feel the freedom of this life and rest content to see others bound by its opposite? To ask such questions is merely the interrogative way of saying that the teaching of Jesus knows no way by which any of his disciples can possess the eternal life without the utmost effort to share it with others. Let us thank God that the offerings of his people in money, in personal service, in time are as great as they are. Before its eyes the world has the proofs that eternal life is a reality here and now, that Jesus is still giving it to men. And yet what are all these gifts compared with the possibilities? The thousands of churches that give nothing to any cause outside of their own needs; the myriads of church-members whose extravagance in personal expenses, and parsimony in gifts to Jesus' cause are in glaring contrast; the fashion to decry foreign missions, and the tendency to leave our fellows to the dimness of ethnic religions prove that the sense of eternal life is faint in many of us. Its heavenly pulses are feeble.

Strength to open mouth in testimony, to open hands in gifts, to open hearts in sympathies, is weak. We need spiritual inflow from above.

The aspect of missionary motive here presented has been all too sketchily treated. To interpret this impulse adequately there would be needed the story of all noble human endeavor. Every heart-burning within ourselves, every word of testimony and exhortation, every deed of service, every gift sent forth with a pure desire for the good of men would have to be used in any complete story of this motive. The achievements of Christian history—moral, intellectual, and social—make up the commentary on this aspect of Christian service. It is God giving life that we are thinking of, the bestowing of the "life that is life indeed." Last summer two travelers stood on the top of Rigi eagerly watching for the panorama that lies so gloriously below that peak. The clouds from the mountain blew over their heads, until at last the fog passed. As it receded from them, the rising sun made a rainbow in the mist, and in the bend of the arch of hope cast their two shadows. They were startled, and at the same time thrilled to see their images framed in by the prism of promise. As the clouds rolled farther away their silhouettes vanished, but town after town was uncovered, and lake and vale and hill leaped out to receive the gorgeous baptism of morning light. The rainbow

enlarged with the recession of the clouds, and widened its span until it had tied everything together with its ribbons of color. Does not God always act in that way? The first tides of light and life within us are confined to the shores of personal pronouns. But no sooner do we call them ours than they grow and burst the bounds of our hearts, and we come to feel that what makes us so happy and privileged must be meant for all men. Our hopes widen to take in others, until our fellow-men, and all creation too, are included in our joy. So would God lead us to that vision that he himself has, that sight of men from which no man is absent, that love that loves the world, that service as wide as the race and as long as time. Let us sound the note of life, the eternal life, and may the blessed ministry of the eternal life endure until all shall share with us its everlasting bliss.

How beautiful it is to be alive !

To wake each morn as if the Maker's grace  
Did us afresh from nothingness derive,

That we might sing, "How happy is our case !  
How beautiful it is to be alive !"

To read in God's great Book, until we feel  
Love for the love that gave it ; then, to kneel

Close up to him whose truth our souls will thrive.  
While every moment's joy doth more reveal  
How beautiful it is to be alive !

Rather to go without what might increase  
Our worldly standing, than our souls deprive  
Of frequent speech with God, or than to cease  
To feel, though having wasted health or peace,  
How beautiful it is to be alive !

Not to forget, when pain and grief draw nigh,  
Into the ocean of time past to dive  
For memories of God's mercies, or try  
To bear all, sweetly hoping still to cry,  
How beautiful it is to be alive !

Thus ever towards man's height of nobleness  
Strive still some new progression to contrive ;  
Till, just as any other friend's, we press  
Death's hand, and having died, feel none the less  
How beautiful it is to be alive !

—*Henry Sept Sutton.*



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